

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00

PM-03 DODE-00 PRS-01 EB-03 /039 W

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P R 111600Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2854

INFO AMEMBASSY SANA

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 JIDDA 7533

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SA, YE

SUBJ: SAUDI-YAR RELATIONS

REF:

A) SANA 3125

B) SANA 3123

C) SANA 3103

D) SANA 3099

E) SANA 3086

F) SANA 3070

G) SANA 3055

H) SANA 3054

I) SANA 3052

J) SANA 3016

K) STATE 264171

L) JIDDA 7501

M) JIDDA 4832

N) JIDDA 4215

O) JIDDA 7188

SUMMARY:

WE CANNOT JUDGE FROM HERE WHAT EFFECT PRINCE TURKI'S  
MEDDLING WILL HAVE ON YEMENI ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE SAG,

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BUT FROM THE JIDDA PERSPECTIVE SAUDI-YAR RELATIONS APPEAR

IN GOOD SHAPE AND LIKELY TO GET BETTER. THOSE RELATIONS WILL NOT EVOLVE AS FAST OR AS FAR AS YEMENI LEADERS WOULD LIKE, HOWEVER, FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS. MOST IMPORTANT ARE SAUDI DOUBTS ABOUT JUST HOW STRONG THEY WANT THE YEMEN TO BECOME. THE SAUDIS ALSO SEE THEIR INFLUENCE WITH THE TRIBES AS A MEANS OF EXERTING SOME CONTROL OVER THE YEMENI CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. THERE ARE DIFFERING VIEWS ON THE CORRECT POLICY TOWARD THE YAR WITHIN THE SAUDI ESTABLISHMENT. MINDEF PRINCE SULTAN IS FREQUENTLY CITED AS THE LEADER OF THE HARDLINERS WHILE CROWN PRINCE FAHD IS CREDITED WITH ADVOCATING A MORE CONCILIATORY POLICY. THERE IS, HOWEVER, NO OPEN DIVISION WITHIN THE SAG ON YEMEN POLICY AND PRINCE SULTAN HAS RECENTLY BEEN MOVING AWAY FROM THE MOST RIGID HARDLINERS. WHEN WE EXERCISE OUR LIMITED ABILITY TO INFLUENCE SAUDI YEMENI POLICY WE SHOULD NOT DO SO IN SUCH A WAY AS TO CREATE OR EXACERBATE TENSIONS WITHIN THE SAG AND ESPECIALLY BETWEEN SULTAN AND FAHD; THEIR CONTINUED COOPERATION IS IMPORTANT FOR SAUDI STABILITY. WE SHOULD NOT TRY TO ENDRUN SULTAN BUT RATHER TO ENCOURAGE HIS ADOPTION OF MORE PROGRESSIVE POSITIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. PRINCE TURKI BIN FAISAL IS NOW BACK IN SAUDI ARABIA. AT THIS JUNCTURE IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT HE HAS ACCOMPLISHED ANYTHING POSITIVE AS A RESULT OF HIS EXTENDED STAY IN THE YEMEN. OF THE SAUDIS AWARE OF THE VISIT -- AND FEW PROBABLY WERE -- WE SUSPECT MOST WOULD AGREE WITH ROYAL ADVISOR KAMAL ADHAM THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN PREFERABLE HAD THE VISIT NOT DRAGGED ON SO LONG. TURKI'S VISIT CONSTITUTED GROSS SAUDI MEDDLING IN YAR INTERNAL AFFAIRS. MOST SAUDIS WOULD CONCEDE THE POINT -- THOUGH NOT ALL WOULD APOLOGIZE FOR IT. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT VIRTUALLY ALL SAUDIS WOULD BE INCREDULOUS IF THEY WERE TOLD THAT TURK I'S VISIT TO YEMEN HAD CONTRIBUTED TO YEMENI INTERNAL INSTABILITY AND PUT SAUDI-YAR RELATIONS UNDER SEVERE STRAIN. TO ALL OUTWARD APPEARANCES (WHICH MEANS THE APPEARANCE DESIRED AND CREATED BY THE SAG) SAUDI-YEMENI RELATIONS, INCLUDING SPECIFICALLY RELATIONS WITH PRESIDENT HAMDI AND HIS GOVERNMENT, ARE EXCELLENT, CLOSE, COOPERATIVE, AND IMPROVING.

2. WE, OF COURSE, LEAVE TO EMBASSY SANA TO JUDGE THE TRUE, LONGER  
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TERM EFFECT WHICH THE TURKI VISIT MIGHT HAVE ON YEMENI WILLINGNESS TO WORK FOR CLOSER RELATIONS WITH THE SAG. (UNDOUBTEDLY THIS WILL BE TREATED IN THE THINK-PIECE ON THE TURKI VISIT PROMISED BY SANA.) FROM THE SAUDI SIDE OF THE FRONTIER, HOWEVER, IT APPEARS THAT THOSE RELATIONS ARE MORE DEEPLY ROOTED THAN AT ANY RECENT TIME AND SHOULD CONTINUE TO FLOURISH IMPERVIOUS TO THE EFFECTS OF AN OCCASIONAL SAUDI GAUCHERIE, NO MATTER HOW EGREGIOUS, SO LONG AS THE INTENTIONS ARE AS BENIGN AS WERE THOSE OF THE TURKI MISSION.

3. EVEN FROM EMBASSY SANA'S MOST RECENT REPORING (REFS A-D)  
WE SEE MORE THAT IS POSITIVE THAN NEGATIVE ON THE BALANCE SHEET  
OF SAUDI-YAR RELATIONS. WE THINK, FOR INSTANCE, THAT THE  
MESSAGE WHICH FONMIN ASNAJ GOT FROM SAUDI MINDEF PRINCE SULTAN IN  
REPLY TO HIS OWN "STRONG" LETTER IS SIGNIFICANT, TURE  
ON THE FACE OF IT, AND GOOD NEWS. LIKE SANA WE ALSO HAVE YET TO  
LEARN THE DETAILED RESULTS OF THE GHASHMI VISIT WHICH WAS WELL  
AND FAVORABLY PUBLICIZED HERE. THE REPORTED SATISFACTION OF HAMDI AND

OTHER TOP YEMENI LEADERS SEEMS TO SUPPORT, HOWEVER, OUR  
PRE-VISIT CONCLUSION (BASED UPON ASSURANCES FROM PRINCE  
SULTAN; SEE REF O) THAT THE SAUDIS WERE PREPARED TO BE  
GENEROUS IN THE DEFENSE AREA AS THEY HAVE BEEN IN THE FIELD OF  
ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, HAVING ARRIVED FINALLY AT THE DECISION TO  
ACCEPT AND SUPPORT HAMDI AS CURRENTLY THE BEST LEADER FOR THE YAR  
AND FOR THE PROTECTION OF SAUDI INTERESTS THERE.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 JIDDA 7533

LIMDIS

4. IT ALSO SEEMS FROM HERE THAT IF THE YEMENIS CAN GET OVER  
THEIR (JUSTIFIED) PEEVE AT TURKI'S VISIT THEY CAN BENEFIT  
FROM IT. TURKI WENT AS A MEDIATOR BUT ENDED UP MORE HAMDI'S  
ADVOCATE WITH AL AHMAR THAN VICE VERSA. WE HAVE HEARD THAT HE  
WAS QUITE IMPRESSED WITH HAMDI WITH WHOM HE PROBABLY NOW  
THINKS HE HAS GOOD PERSONAL RELATIONS.

5. HAVING SAID SAUDI-YEMENI RELATIONS LOOK FROM HERE TO BE BETTER THAN THEY HAVE IN YEARS, WITH EXCELLENT PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVEMENT, IT SHOULD ALSO BE SAID THAT THOSE RELATIONS ARE NOT LIKELY IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE TO BECOME ALL THAT THE YEMENI LEADERSHIP WOULD LIKE THEM TO BE. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF LIMITING FACTORS ON THE SAUDI SIDE WHICH WE HAVE POINTED OUT PREVIOUSLY BUT WHICH CAN OBVIOUSLY BEAR REITERATION. FIRST, WHILE

THE SAUDIS WANT THE YAR TO BE STRONG ENOUGH TO RESIST EXTERNAL THREATS FROM THE PDRY OR OTHER RADICAL STATES AND CAPABLE OF DEALING WITH THE PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPMENT WHICH MUST BE TACKLED TO GUARANTEE INTERNAL STABILITY, THEY SEEM TO HAVE LITTLE INTEREST IN HELPING TO CREATE A YEMEN STRONG ENOUGH TO DEMAND THAT IT BE TREATED AS AN EQUAL. THE THOUGHT IS SELDOM FAR FROM SAUDI MINDS THAT THEY ARE OUTNUMBERED BY THEIR INTELLIGENT AND INDUSTRIOUS NEIGHBORS TO THE SOUTH.

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6. THE SAUDIS ARE COMMITTED TO "PROGRESS" FOR THEMSELVES AND THEY WOULD NOT WISH TO DENY IT TO THEIR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORS: THIS MEANS

EFFECTIVE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION. BUT HABITS OF THE PAST DIE SLOWLY. WE DOUBT THAT MANY SAUDIS TRULY BELIEVE THAT THERE STILL EXISTS A TRIBAL OPTION, BUT CONTINUATION OF THE HALLOWED CUSTOM OF SUBVENTIONS TO TRIBAL LEADERS IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE: IN THE SAUDI VIEW IT PROVIDES A POTENTIALLY USEFUL LEVER ON THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND, IN ANY CASE, ONE DOES NOT (IF ONE IS A SAUDI) LIGHTLY ABANDON LONG-TIME ALLIES -- EVEN THOSE OF DUBIOUS LOYALTY.

7. THE PROPOENTS OF THE OLD, AND HOPEFULLY FADING, POLICIES (CHARACTERIZED BY THE DIVIDE AND RULE PRINCIPLE) ARE STILL VERY MUCH AROUND. THESE ARE GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO INCLUDE

MINDEF PRINCE SULTAN AND HIS MATERNAL UNCLES. CROWN PRINCE FHAD IS GENERALLY ASSOCIATED WITH SAUDI ARABIA'S RECENT MORE OUTGOING AND CONCILIATORY POLICIES TOWARDS ITS NEIGHBORS. FOREIGN MINISTER PRINCE SAUD AL FAISAL IS BECOMING AN IMPORTANT -- AND

IN SOME AREAS THE DOMINANT -- FIGURE IN ALL ASPECTS OF SAUDI FOREIGN POLICY. A TOUGH-MINDED PERSON, HE CAN PROBABLY BE SAFELY COUNTED WITH

THE SOFTLINERS WHERE THE YEMEN IS CONCERNED. WE HAVE NO INDICATION THAT THERE IS OPEN DISAGREEMENT WITHIN THE SAG OVER YEMEN POLICY. RATHER, SULTAN APPEARS TO BE MOVING TOWARDS A MORE CONCILIATORY POLICY AND AWAY

FROM HIS VERY CONSERVATIVE -- NOT TO SAY REACTIONARY -- UNCLES. WE HOPE THIS TREND WILL CONTINUE AND THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE THAT

IT WILL. WE CAN HAVE A MARGINAL IMPACT ON KEEPING THINGS MOVING IN THIS DIRECTION (SEE REF L). IT IS UNLIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT SAUDI POLICY WILL CHANGE OVERNIGHT. THERE MUST BE DUE REGARD FOR SEMLINESS AND THE OPINIONS OF OTHERS WITHIN THE SAUDI ESTABLISHMENT; THIS MILITATES AGAINST HASTE.

8. AS FAR AS US POLICY INTERESTS ARE CONCERNED, OUR DESIRE TO SEE SAUDI ARABIA ADOPT A MORE POSITIVE POSTURE VIS-A-VIS THE YAR SHOULD BE BALANCED AGAINST OUR INTEREST IN NOT SEEING THE SAUDI ESTABLISHMENT GET IN AN INTERNAL ROW OVER YEMEN  
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POLICY. IN PARTICULAR, WE WOULD NOT LIKE TO SEE A SPLIT DEVELOP BETWEEN PRINCES SULTAN AND FAHD OVER THIS ISSUE. OVER THE SHORT AND MEDIUM TERMS AT LEAST, STABILITY IN SAUDI ARABIA IS TO A LARGE EXTENT DEPENDENT UPON THE CONTINUED CLOSE COOPERATION OF THESE TWO FULL BROTHERS.

9. THE YEMEN IS A POTENTIALLY DEVISIVE ISSUE. IN EXERCISING WHAT LITTLE INFLUENCE WE HAVE OVER SAUDI POLICY TOWARD THE YEMEN WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL NOT TO EXACERBATE INTERNAL RIVALRIES. IN PARTICULAR WE SEE LITTLE TO BE GAINED AND POTENTIALLY MUCH TO BE LOST IN ENDRUNNING SULTAN BY GOING TO FAHD. SULTAN IS COMING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. WE SHOULD TRY TO BE PATIENT WITH HIM AND ENCOURAGE HIM TO COME FURTHER. WE MAY, OF COURSE, DISCUSS THE YEMEN WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER AT ANY TIME WITHOUT SEEMING TO BE TAKING SIDES. GIVEN SAUD'S MORE PROMINENT ROLE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS THIS CAN BE TO GOOD EFFECT. WE WOULD IN ANY CASE PREFER THAT WHEN POSSIBLE THE CHOICE OF INTERLOCUTOR ON THE YEMEN BE LEFT TO THIS EMBASSY'S DISCRETION.  
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